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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **CALIFORNIA MAN SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS IN PRISON FOR IMPERSONATING AN FBI AGENT**

TUCSON, Ariz. –The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on April 7, 2005, Juan Gutierrez Lira, 68, of El Centro, California, was sentenced to six (6) months imprisonment, by United States District Judge Frank R. Zapata.

In early October 2004, the defendant met with a federal inmate at the Central Arizona Detention Center in Florence, Ariz., and represented to the inmate that he was a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") and that he was able to arrange the inmate's release from prison in exchange for \$150,000. On November 9, 2004, an FBI agent working in an undercover capacity ("UCA") met with the defendant in Tucson, Ariz., posing as a member of the inmate's family seeking to arrange the inmate's release from prison. During the meeting, the defendant gave the UCA a business card which depicted the defendant as a Special Agent with the FBI. The defendant requested \$175,000 to arrange for the inmate's release and demanded an initial payment of \$75,000. A second meeting was scheduled for early December 2004, at which time the defendant was to be paid \$75,000. On December 2, 2004, the UCA met with the defendant at a hotel in Tucson, Ariz., and paid the defendant \$75,000 for his services in arranging for the inmate's release from prison. The defendant was subsequently arrested by FBI agents.

On January 27, 2005, the defendant entered a plea of guilty to an Information charging him with False Personation of an Officer or Employee of the United States, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 912. The defendant's six month prison sentence will be followed by six months of home confinement as part of his one year term of supervised release.

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The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The prosecution was handled by Eric Markovich, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-00152-TUC-FRZ

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